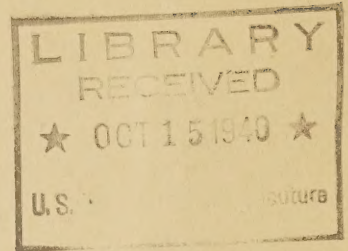


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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
Bureau of Agricultural Economics



Farmers' Attitudes Toward  
Continuance of AAA  
and  
Need to Adjust it to War Development

(FOR ADMINISTRATIVE USE ONLY)

September 23, 1940

Division of Program Surveys

January 1, 1900

Dear Sir,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 29th inst.

and in reply to inform you that the same has been forwarded to the proper authorities.

I am, Sir, very respectfully,  
Yours truly,  
J. H. [Name]

Enclosed for you are two copies of the report of the committee on the subject of the proposed change in the curriculum.

I am, Sir, very respectfully,  
Yours truly,  
J. H. [Name]

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This report is based on 884 interviews with farm men. 464 were collected between February 17 and May 18, the remainder between May 20 and June 23.

The first group of analyses, built around the question "How long should the AAA be continued?" is not completely comparable to the second group, whose focus is "Will the war increase or decrease the need for the (major local) ACP?" Nevertheless, the relationship seems close enough to warrant joint consideration.

### Summary of Results

1. Answers to "How long should the AAA be continued?" seem to be closely related to farmers' price expectations. Favorableness toward the AAA appears to have grown hand-in-hand with the dwindling of rosy hopes for agricultural prices which has taken place since the attack on the Low Countries. Before that invasion, price expectations seemed to be increasingly optimistic and attitudes toward AAA correspondingly less and less favorable.
2. The upper economic levels, the best educated, operators of the large farms--these are the over-lapping groups which seem most favorably inclined toward the AAA and most apprehensive concerning the effects of war on agriculture.
3. Although 45% mentioned wanting changes made in the ACP, only 28% related the need for changes to war developments. The same groups mentioned above as favoring the AAA were the very ones who called most for such changes.





PART I

Attitudes toward Continuance of AAA

I. Over-all results and changes with time

A. How long should the AAA be continued? 1/

		<u>Percent of Farmers</u>		
		<u>Total</u>	<u>Period I</u> <u>2/17-3/26</u>	<u>Period II</u> <u>3/26-5/18</u>
A.				
Indefinitely	: 34%		:36%	:33%
Until some of farmers' dis-	:		:	:
advantages are adjusted	: <u>20</u>	54%	: <u>28</u>	64% : <u>15</u> 48%
B.				
Program is only a stop-gap;				
drop it with return of				
better times		6	3	8
Keep some parts and drop				
others; make fairer or				
drop		4	4	6
C.				
Drop programs--substitute				
some other type of farm aid		6	4	7
Drop programs and return to				
free enterprise		13	7	16
D.				
Uncertain but debates ques-				
tion		7	7	6
Don't know; not concerned		<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>9</u>
		100%	100%	100%
No. of Replies		464	204	260

- 
- The first two comments (Group A) involve acceptance of the AAA programs. Those saying "indefinitely" regard them as a relatively permanent feature of agriculture; the others regard them as good and practical, but expect prices to return to acceptable levels some day in the moderately distant future. The next four comments (Groups B and C) are increasingly critical of the programs.





The above table suggests that:

1. Although a certain amount of fluctuation was evident during the period covered, there remained a hard core, made up of approximately one-half the sample, that continued to think of the AAA as a necessary, long range program. The unwavering opponents of the program marshalled only 10 percent of the sample as wanting to have the programs dropped.
2. Support for AAA as a needed long term program declined somewhat between Period I and Period II. The proportion of the sample in Group A dropped from 64% to 48%. At the same time, the proportion in the opposition Group C doubled.
  - a. The first of the two periods ended before Germany's invasion of Norway and Denmark. The Scandinavian assault and the attack on the Western Front took place during the second period, which ended just before the surrender of Belgium.
  - b. Collateral material collected during these periods shows that by and large the entire period up to the attack on Holland and Belgium was one of rising price expectations by farmers. The peak was reached just before the end of the second period, by which time only 4% expected a price decline, while 56% expected price rises.
  - c. Thus the reduction in willingness to accept AAA as a necessary long run program was associated with an increase in farmers' belief that prices for agricultural products would rise.
3. Incidentally, it is interesting to note that answers to "How long should the AAA be continued?" were couched in terms of the relationship which was felt to exist between the AAA and farmers' problems rather than in terms of some specific number of years. Thus, the following types of comments appeared frequently. "Well, as long as I live we'll need it." "As long as conditions are like they are now." "Let it go as soon as farmers get on their feet a little better." "We'd a been better off if there hadn't ever been a AAA--they can junk it tomorrow for all I care."



B. Will the war increase or decrease the need for the (major local) ACP?

	<u>Percent of Farmers</u>		
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Period III</u> <u>5/20-6/10</u>	<u>Period IV</u> <u>6/10-6/23</u>
Will increase need	47%	46%	49%
No change; no difference	21	22	19
Will decrease need	8	10	5
Uncertain; don't know	18	14	25
Not interested	<u>6</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>2</u>
	100%	100%	100%
No. of Replies	420	284	136

The above table suggests that:

1. During the next and more violently critical stages of the war, we found that almost one-half the sample feel that war developments increase the need for the ACP.
2. Whatever changes are discernible between Periods III and IV seem to emphasize an increase in uncertainty and the absence of any movement away from the ACP.
  - a. Period III began with Belgium's surrender and ended with Italy's declaration of war. Period IV closed with the surrender of France.
  - b. There was so slight a drop in price expectations between Periods III and IV as to constitute almost no change.
3. Since the greater part of those in the "No change; No difference" group are pro-AAA, comparison of these results with the only semi-comparable results presented in "A" above indicates an increase in favorableness toward the AAA developing hand-in-hand with the dwindling of rosy hopes concerning agricultural prices.

The break in price expectations came with the collapse of resistance in the Low Countries. Comparison of Periods III and IV with the earlier ones shows that at the peak of optimism only 4% expected prices to drop and 56% expected them to rise, while the later periods show half or more expecting a price drop and only about one-fifth anticipating price increases.





## II. Analysis of group differences in above attitudes

### A. Analysis of differences among major crop regions

#### 1. How long should the AAA be continued?

	Percent of Farmers in each region				
	Corn	Cotton	Wheat	Gt.Lakes Dairy	East'n Dairy
Indefinitely	44%	43%	21%	26%	21%
Until some of farmers' disadvantages are adjusted	21	65%	18	61%	42
	65%	18	61%	42	63%
	20	46%	4	25%	
Program only a stop- gap; drop it with return of better times	4	9	5	2	11
Keep some parts; drop others; make fairer or drop	5	1	3	8	0
Drop programs--substitute some other type of farm aid	8	5	3	8	2
Drop programs and return to free enterprise	5	9	16	15	34
Uncertain but debates question	4	8	5	9	7
Don't know; not concerned	9	7	5	12	21
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
No. of Replies	131	103	58	65	47
Time period	February 17 - May 18, 1940 Periods I and II				

These results, based on crop region samples of varying adequacies in regard to size suggest that Corn and Cotton belt farmers regarded AAA as needed more permanently than those in other areas. Wheat farmers were next in line. Dissatisfaction seems to have been most prevalent in the Dairy regions where one-third or more were in favor of immediate changing or dropping of the programs and where disinterestedness was more frequent than anywhere else.





2. Will the war increase or decrease the need for the (major local) ACP?

Percent of Farmers

	<u>Corn</u>	<u>Wheat</u>	<u>Cotton</u>	<u>Gt.Lakes Dairy</u>	<u>East'n Dairy</u>
Will increase need	64%	79%	80%	20%	15%
No change; no difference	7	6	14	32	26
Will decrease need	9	0	0	16	9
Uncertain--don't know	19	15	6	14	25
Not interested	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>25</u>
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
No. Replies	111	48	50	50	47

Time period: May 20 - June 23; Periods III and IV

Acceptance of an increased need for the ACP because of the war was indicated most often in the Cotton and Wheat areas with Corn not far behind. 1/ The Dairy regions ranked highest in the proportion who felt that the need for the ACP was decreased by war, and also in the proportion who mentioned disinterestedness. Uncertainty was heavy in several areas.

B. Analysis of differences by economic levels and by educational levels.

1. Economic levels

The following tables suggest that both as regards the length of time that the AAA should be continued and the effect of war on the need for the ACP, farmers in the upper income groups are more favorable toward the programs than those in the lower economic groups. Uncertainty and disinterestedness seem to appear somewhat more frequently among the less successful.

2. Educational levels

Substitute college educated for upper economic group and grammar school training for lowest economic class and the above summary will apply to the breakdowns by education. It should be pointed out, however, that the differences in attitudes are sharper when education is the basis for comparison of groups.

- 
1. This lagging by Corn seems to be accounted for by the fact that two-thirds of our corn interviews were in the "feeder grains" areas and only one-third in the "cash corn" section--and results in the former are less favorable to AAA than they are in the latter.



# How Long Should the AAA be Continued

	<u>Economic Level</u>			<u>Education</u>	
	<u>Lower</u>	<u>Medium</u>	<u>Upper</u>	<u>Grammar</u>	<u>High College</u>
Indefinitely					
Until some of farmers' disadvantages are adjusted	30%	34%	38%	34%	36%
	<u>16</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>33</u>
	46%	57%	58%	52%	69%
Program only a stop-gap; drop it with return of better times	7	2	8	6	6
Keep some parts, drop others; make fairer or drop	3	3	6	4	5
Drop programs--substitute some other type of farm aid	5	8	4	4	6
Drop programs and return to free enterprise	14	12	12	15	6
Uncertain but debates question	7	7	6	6	3
Don't know; not concerned	<u>18</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>5</u>
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	118	125	206	285	36
No. Replies	Periods I and II - February 17 to May 18				
Dates					

## Will the War Increase or Decrease the Need for the (Major local) AC Program

	<u>Economic Level</u>			<u>Education</u>	
	<u>Lower</u>	<u>Medium</u>	<u>Upper</u>	<u>Grammar</u>	<u>High College</u>
Will increase need	35%	43%	55%	40%	74%
No change; no difference	17	18	23	23	15
Will decrease need	12	13	4	8	0
Uncertain; don't know	28	18	13	20	10
Not interested	<u>8</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>0</u>
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	96	115	208	276	39
No. Replies	Periods III and IV - May 20 to June 23				
Dates					





C. Analysis of differences by tenure and size of farm

1. Using three size of farm groups, under 175, 175 to 330, and over 330, we find that the larger the farm the greater the proportion of operators who are certain that the war will increase the need for the ACP--this view being held by 41% in the smallest size group and 68% of the largest farm group.
2. Breakdowns by tenure show little evidence of significant differences between owners and tenants on these questions.

III. Reasons and comments given in support of attitudes toward continuance of AAA.

A. How long should the AAA be continued?

	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Regions where most mentioned</u>
<u>Favorable reasons mentioned most frequently</u>		
Need help to save land or build soil	36%	Widely distributed
Need crop restrictions to assure farm welfare	27	Corn and Cotton
Prices would be worse without programs	23	Widely distributed except in Dairy areas
Farmers need help, are hard up	14	Dairy and cut-over in Wisc. and Minn.
	<u>100%</u>	
No. Mentions	231	

Unfavorable reasons mentioned most frequently

Will have to pay back in taxes, expensive, etc.	37%	N. E. Dairy
Favors other measures: guaranteed prices, elimination of imports	35	Generally distributed
Make farmers dependent, principles of program wrong	14	N. E. Dairy
Drop crop restrictions, there is no surplus now	<u>14</u>	
	<u>100%</u>	
No. Mentions	94	

B. Will the war increase or decrease the need for the (major local) ACP

	<u>Percent</u>
Reasons for believing need will be increased	
Markets will be lost, so farmers will need more help through the programs	41%
To control war expansion and production	35
To avoid market fluctuations; give price protection during unsettled periods	<u>24</u>
	<u>100%</u>
No. Mentions	200





	<u>Percent</u>
Reasons for believing need will be decreased	
War will require Government to spend for other things in place of farm programs	60%
War will increase demand for farm products so much that programs will be unnecessary	<u>40</u>
	100%
No. of Mentions	59

## PART II

### Making Changes in ACP because of War

#### I. Attitudes toward need for making changes in ACP because of war.

##### A. Should any changes be made in the ACP because of the war?

	<u>Percent</u>
Changes needed	27%
Don't know; uncertain	13
Changes not needed	13
Indifferent; unconcerned	19
Want changes but with no war focus	<u>13</u>
	100%
No. Replies	259
Dates	May 20 - June 23, Periods III and IV

##### B. Differences in above answers by economic levels

	<u>Percent of Farmers</u>		
	<u>Low Income</u>	<u>Medium Income</u>	<u>High Income</u>
Changes needed	17%	29%	32%
Don't know; uncertain	20	13	17
Changes not needed	22	16	17
Indifferent; unconcerned	30	16	15
Want changes but with no war focus	<u>11</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>19</u>
	100%	100%	100%
No. Replies	60	73	126



C. Differences in above answers by tenure levels

	<u>Percent of Farmers</u>	
	<u>Owners</u>	<u>Tenants</u>
Changes needed	24	39
Don't know; uncertain	17	15
Changes not needed	18	16
Indifferent; unconcerned	20	18
Want changes but with no war focus	<u>21</u>	<u>12</u>
	100%	100%
No. Replies	161	80

D. Differences in above answers by crop regions

	<u>Percent of Farmers</u>				
	<u>Corn</u>	<u>Wheat</u>	<u>Cotton</u>	<u>Gt.L.Dairy</u>	<u>E.Dairy</u>
Changes needed	57%	2%	27%	21%	2%
Don't know; uncertain	15	15	20	17	17
Changes not needed	2	28	20	9	13
Indifferent; unconcerned	4	17	25	40	51
Want changes but with no war focus	<u>22</u>	<u>37</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>17</u>
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
No. Replies	110	46	48	47	47

E. Differences in above answers by educational levels

	<u>Percent of Farmers</u>		
	<u>Grammar</u>	<u>High</u>	<u>College</u>
Changes needed	18	33	62
Don't know; uncertain	19	10	0
Changes not needed	15	12	10
Indifferent; unconcerned	30	18	8
Want changes but with no war focus	<u>18</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>20</u>
	100%	100%	100%
No. Replies	260	87	39





II. Reasons given in support of attitude toward need for changes in AAA because of the war

Frequency

Changes in programs suggested because of war

Should give farmers price guarantees or use equivalent measures	61
Government should keep close watch on demand and adjust to it; need better control over prices and agriculture in general	33
Programs should emphasize Soil Conservation more; War will increase need for S.C.	26
Government should stop or restrict speculation	24
War makes a compulsory program desirable	23
Government should build up war supplies	14
Government should increase size of allotments or eliminate them	13
Provide direct subsidies for production	1
Give away surpluses	<u>1</u>
No. Mentions	196

Changes suggested not particularly connected with war

Drop program - it's no good	54
Loan features of program should be extended to other crops	24
Adjust program practices better to local conditions	24
Help small farmers more	16
Pay on Soil Conserving crops rather than on Soil Depleting crops	3
Reduce requirements for compliance	<u>2</u>
No. Mentions	123

